

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 24, 2004

The Honorable Ernest J. Istook  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,  
and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable John Olver  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,  
and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman Istook and Representative Olver:

We are writing in support of increased funding for the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997 (DFCA) and the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign -- two central elements to our national drug prevention strategy.

We appreciate your commitment to drug prevention and the Committee-reported funding level of \$70 million for Drug-Free Communities. We ask that full funding at \$80 million be considered as the legislative process moves forward. The \$10 million increase from the FY2004 funding level is necessary to build and strengthen effective community anti-drug coalitions. It is crucial that communities around the country are organized to respond to their local drug problems in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The DFCA warrants the \$10 million increase because the community coalition approach has proven effective in reducing teen drug use in communities around the country.

For example, in Framingham, MA, current 30-day alcohol use for all responding students decreased at a rate of 17.5 percent from 40 percent in 1996 to 33 percent in 2001 (Massachusetts, Framingham Coalition for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse). In Oklahoma, past 30-day tobacco use among high school students decreased at a rate of 47 percent from 38 percent in 1999 to 20 percent in 2001 (Oklahoma, Commerce-Picher-Cardin Coalition).

In addition, the funding available for this program has been historically insufficient to meet the overwhelming demand, even with the annual increase of \$10 million a year. In FY 2003 and 2004 there was only enough funding to support 39 percent and 44 percent respectively, of the communities that submitted applications for the program.

We also write with our strong support for the President's request of \$145 million for the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign. Since 1998, the government has run the Anti-Drug Media Campaign with the help of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

September 24, 2004

Data shows that the Media Campaign is working. The Media Campaign helps initiate conversations about substance abuse between parents and their children. And survey results confirm that youth are getting the right messages about drug use. The ads have contributed to a climate of disapproval of drug use that is imperative to reducing the human, social, and financial costs of this deadly disease. The Media Campaign reaches 90 percent of the youth audience 4 times a week; and 74 percent of the parent audience 3.5 times a week. Recent data also indicates that kids who see or hear anti-drug ads at least once a day are less likely to do drugs than other adolescents who don't see or hear ads frequently.

We know that one important way to get the drug prevention message across is through the media: television, radio and newspapers. We firmly believe that an effective media campaign will help prevent and delay the onset of substance abuse among youth.

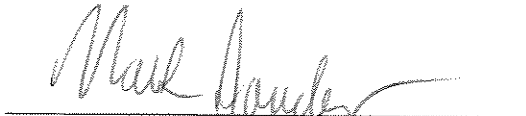
Prevention efforts like the Drug-Free Communities program and the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign have had a significant impact on drug use in this country. The 2003 Monitoring the Future survey shows an 11 percent decline in drug use by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students over the past two years. The finding translates into 400,000 fewer teen drug users over two years.

Please consider additional funding for these two vital programs. The Drug-Free Communities Program and the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign are critical programs that help prevent substance abuse among adolescents in all of our districts.

Sincerely,



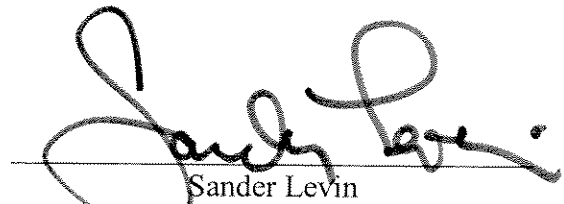
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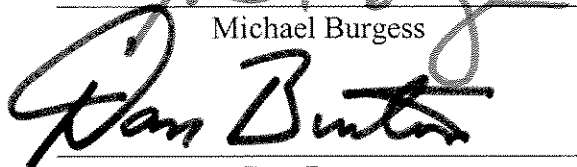


Elijah Cummings

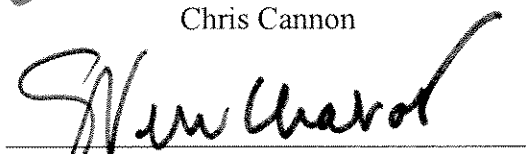


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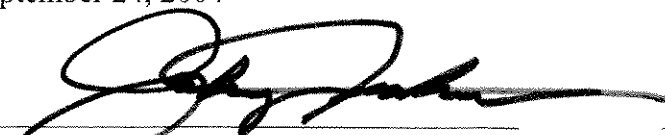
  
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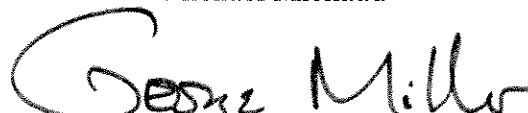
  
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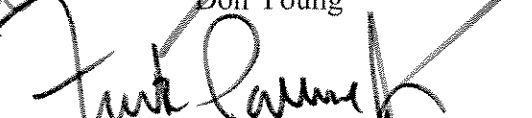
  
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Rob Simmons

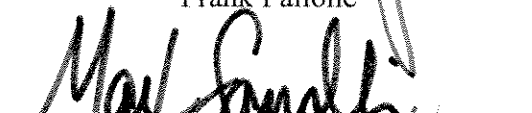
  
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